


Abraham Lincoln

WITH COMPLIMENTS OF
W. MARTIN JONES,
ROCHESTER, N. Y.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from

The Institute of Museum and Library Services through an Indiana State Library LSTA Grant



Abraham Lincoln

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

W. MARTIN JONES

AT

Phoenix, N. Y.

ON

The Thirtieth Day of May, 1904

PRESS OF R. W. LACE
ROCHESTER, N. Y.
1904

INTRODUCTION.

Yielding to repeated solicitations of friends I have had the following address on Abraham Lincoln put in print. As a mere brochure on the life of the most eminent American of his century, the address might well be materially altered, but I prefer to print it as I delivered it—without amendment or addition. I seek only to make the book suitable for presentation to friends, and, as a leaf from the history of a most interesting and eventful period, I take pleasure in placing it in their possession.

The picture facing the title page is, in my opinion, the best likeness extant of Abraham Lincoln. It occurs to me that the book will hardly be complete without it. The autograph is a reproduction of Mr. Lincoln's signature as it was affixed to a commission at the Department of State only a few days before that sad Good Friday in 1865, that witnessed the tragedy at Ford's Theater. From personal knowledge I believe I am justified in saying that Mr. Lincoln signed all official documents with his full name. I do not remember to have seen any such paper bearing

INTRODUCTION

his signature with his first name abbreviated. It was a frequent occurrence, however, for him to sign his name "A. Lincoln" to letters and other unofficial documents, but when the matter was of a distinctively official character the name was written as indicated by the signature,—
ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

The labor of preparing this address on the life, work and character of the great emancipator, and of putting it in print, has been a labor of love—love for the remnant of the "Boys in Blue" who invited me to speak to them, a mere fraction of the great Union Army, with many divisions of which I camped on tented fields when stern visaged war was our bed-fellow, and love for the great hearted patriot whose beautiful life has become a benediction to the nations and is the equal heritage of every American Freeman.

THE AUTHOR.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

THIS day is consecrated. Decorated with beautiful flowers, moistened with patriotic tears and hallowed in loving, throbbing heart beats, it is unique as well as national in the American calendar. Annually we gather in loving remembrance of the noble men—now just over the way—who went out more than forty years ago to maintain national integrity and to demonstrate to the world that the last great effort of a free people to govern themselves was not—what despotism had prophesied—a gigantic failure. We have come a long way from the days when the clarion notes of the war bugle sounded clear and loud along the valleys and over the hill and mountain tops, of this fair land, calling men from the work-shop and the field, boys from the counting-room and the class-room, to put on the “Blue” and march to a country’s salvation. But time cannot efface the memory of those Spartan scenes. As I stand here to-day looking into the bronzed faces of the remnant of those brave men, who responded to that call it all comes to me anew. Time seems turning backward in its relentless forward march. I am again a boy in

my teens, poring over problems that puzzle pupils, ransacking lexicons for solutions of mystifying maxims, and trying diligently to accomplish results that seemed then to me to be so far beyond human attainment. Again I witness the exciting political campaign of the memorable year 1860. Again I hear the drum beat and see the marching columns of voters as they pass in review before excited multitudes, preparing for the battle of the ballots. I hear the bells ringing and the shouts that proclaim the victory of a party that was bold enough and true enough and strong enough to declare that there must be no further extension of slave territory on the continent governed by this nation. I catch from day to day startling news that comes over the wires from the Land of the Palmetto; I hear the report of the gun that fires on the American Flag in Charleston Harbor, and I see the preparations of an awakened people, as men gather for the purpose of demonstrating that this Union must live and that the great problems set for solution on this continent must be worked out by the patient labor of free men. Then, I see the marching thousands as they go on to the conflict in the South and now—away in the year 1904—I am looking into the faces—no longer with round and ruddy cheeks—of some of those who went out under such circumstances to do their duty at the front and who, alone of the vast numbers that responded so promptly, so

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

generously and so patriotically to the call of the country in its hour of peril, are left to commemorate the scenes of those days that tried men's souls.

It has come to be a recognized principle among men and nations that in an hour of peril, when men and nations need a leader, God raises up one made of just the right material for the circumstances. So it was in the dark and stormy period of the American Revolution. I need not name the Father of his country. So it was in the days of the French Revolution. Napoleon Bonaparte was the fruit of the civilization that preceded him. He has been judged by history, yet I sometimes feel that he may have been *misjudged* by history, but, be that as it may, he was of the mettle that was required to blaze the way for the future France. He did it, but his ambition was of that character that led him into excesses and, eventually, left him stranded on St. Helena. Time came, later when on this continent one was needed to serve a people in their hour of peril,—a man of cool judgment, conscientious purpose, patriotic motives, undaunted by fear, unmoved by malice and untouched by ambition. There were many men of the period who could have done noble work but it is a grave question now, as we look back to those days over a period of forty years intervening, whether in all the land, there was another who, under all the circumstances, and burdened

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

by the conditions that beset the Nation at the time of the opening of the conflict in the year 1861, could have performed the duties of a leader in such a perilous moment, as perfectly and as successfully as did ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Born of poor parentage, in a Slave State, migrating at an early age into a non-slaveholding State, on the border between two classes of civilization, he had little opportunity in his early life to solve the great problems that were demanding the attention of the thinking men of the nation. He spent his early days in a condition little removed from want and wretchedness but there was implanted within the man that keen sense of justice, tempered with mercy, and tempered yet again with a great fund of humor, that prepared him magnificently for the gigantic work that lay before him.

In order fairly to understand the circumstances under which his early days were spent, it becomes necessary to glance briefly at the state of society and the conditions that prevailed along the Ohio border. Due to the proximity of the border free states north of the Ohio River to slaveholding territory, the people of that section were brought face to face with many of the evils growing out of the peculiar institution across the river. The frequent coming into the Free States of escaping bondmen forced upon the northern whites a startling contrast between the conditions that existed in slave territory and American civil-

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ization, as it was sought to be nurtured and cultivated north of the Ohio River.

Necessarily, the attention of Abraham Lincoln was directed from time to time to these conditions, and, possessing a keen sense of justice and right, he was not long in coming to the conclusion that a great wrong was being committed in the enslavement of human beings on this continent. As early as the year 1820, the minds of men began to turn to a consideration of these conditions. Along this border line and within free territory, men's interests prompted them to lean toward the aristocracy of the South. The merchants of border cities found their best customers coming from south of the Ohio river and people of wealth and those seeking influential associations found it to their advantage, in one way and another, to sympathize with the slaveholder who had lost his slave on free territory and give him aid in his endeavor to regain his fleeing property. We are all familiar with the crisis that came to Lane Seminary, in the suburbs of Cincinnati, and over which, that fearless champion of human rights, Lyman Beecher of Connecticut, once presided. Here also, lived his daughter, Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose husband was an instructor in the Seminary, and here she became familiar with the peculiar institution, which enabled her subsequently to strike a blow for freedom that has never been surpassed by any writer of fiction.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Out of this crisis that came to Lane Seminary came the establishment of the well-known Abolition School at Oberlin. Then appeared upon the political landscape a character whose personality has been stamped indelibly upon the civilization of that period,—James G. Birney. He, too, was a Kentuckian by birth, was once a slaveholder, but, yielding to his own awakened conscience, renounced the system, set his own slaves free and devoted his life and all he possessed in the world to secure the manumission of slaves in America. Men began to think on these questions very earnestly. Like Banco's ghost, the subject would not "down." It would rise in the most unexpected places. One, a little bolder than another, with fixed opinions and conscientious purposes, would speak his sentiments and instantly the community was in a tumult. The spirit of compromise possessed politicians, but compromise was inadequate. It had become indeed an "irrepressible conflict." The forties came and went, the Missouri compromise was adopted and abandoned, the last great compromise of Henry Clay, in 1850, that was to settle all troubles, was forced to its conclusion, and yet the conflict was still irrepressible. He who was most affected by all these contests refused to be content while still held in unwilling bondage, and nightly, with his eye on the north star, and daily, with his knowledge that the moss grew on the north side of

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

the forest tree, he followed his weary road to freedom. Some of us here to-day remember how in childhood we listened with rapt attention and with hearts burning in hatred of the institution, while the poor slave on his way to freedom by the underground railroad told of his wrongs and showed us the marks of his cruel treatment. Some of us, too, have probably seen the institution as it was, and have touched hands with the poor sons and daughters of Africa as they toiled early and late in the fields of the Southern owner with no compensation for their labor other than the rags they wore and the coarse food they received to keep soul and body together.

The fact, however, existed, that as a Confederation the people of the states respectively held control over this question exclusively. Recognizing the fact that slavery existed in all the colonies of the confederation prior to the Revolution that separated them from the mother country, we find a reason for the retention of the system in a climate that required the services of men who were able to withstand conditions that were supposed to be beyond the endurance of the white race. The people of the South were brought up in the conscientious belief that slavery was a condition, for the black man superior to that of freedom. In slavery he was cared for in childhood and in old age, while in the period between he only paid for his care and

maintenance in the beginning and in the ending of his career. The South chose to continue slavery, while the North chose to abolish it. It was entirely in the hands of the respective colonies and the South could with propriety say to the North that it was a matter that the North had nothing to do with; that the South came into the Confederation as separate and independent states or nationalities; that slavery was a legal institution, that it existed in these separate colonies and states at the time of the adoption of the First Articles of Confederation and was recognized in the Constitution in 1787; that as so recognized these states became a part and parcel of the Confederation; that they came into it as independent municipalities, that they resigned to the general government no power on the subject of slavery within their respective borders and that they could not be interfered with by other members of that compact. There was very much in this argument. It was sound from the position occupied by the Southern States. The Constitution so far recognized the institution of slavery, that it provided that no law should be enacted prior to the year 1808, that should prohibit the traffic in slaves from Africa. It was known and understood that at the time of the making of this federal union there was a business being carried on across the sea whereby men and women were being brought from Africa and sold into bondage on the Western side of the

Atlantic, and it is also a well recognized fact that much of this traffic was carried on by ship-owners and navigators who came from Northern states, and who plied the traffic for the benefit of Southern slaveholders because, in doing it, they reaped a large profit themselves. And so, while there was an evident desire on the part of many members of the Convention that framed the Constitution under which we are living to-day, to blot out the remembrance even of a traffic in human flesh across the sea, there was, nevertheless, an element in the South, where they felt that they needed more laborers to hold on to that traffic, and it was only upon a compromise that it was finally agreed that this traffic should be prohibited at the end of twenty years. Accordingly, it must be admitted by all candid men that the Union of the States could not then have been accomplished on the basis finally agreed upon except it had been upon such a compromise as would admit into the Union communities that believed in slavery and in continuing it in some portions of the Confederacy. These facts we must recognize, when we come at this late day, more than forty years after the final outburst between the two sections, to consider the conditions that then existed and rightly and properly to understand the duties that necessarily devolved upon men who were placed in responsible positions over the entire nation.

While Abraham Lincoln had been educated in

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

the severe school of adversity and want, when he was forced, in gaining a livelihood, to navigate flat boats on the shallow streams of the West and to split rails in farm work, he was also familiar from his childhood with the peculiar institution of involuntary servitude.

I venture the statement that there never was a time when he did not absolutely abhor the institution of slavery. His soul revolted with righteous indignation at even the thought that one man could legally hold title to another. Yet, he was himself, a poor boy, born under circumstances that left but a thin parting between the ways of the poor white man and the colored slave. At the time when Abraham Lincoln came to be identified in any manner with public affairs in the nation, there had come to be great agitation over the further extension of slavery in the country. If the discussion could have been kept down to the question of laws and the Constitution, the South and the slaveholding aristocracy had the advantage of title to the peculiar institution by undisputed recognition on the part of all the rest of the Nation and on the part of the Constitution itself, and they held, what has always been regarded as nine points out of ten of the law, possession, absolute and recognized, of the institution itself. Accordingly, when such bold men as Burney and Garrison and Phillips and a host of others forced the issue of free speech, free soil and free man, and denounced

slavery as a cruel wrong, not to say a wasteful, demoralizing, murderous and soul-destroying institution, the South felt, and, naturally, from their standpoint believed, that the other portion of the Confederation was taking a course that was unjust, inequitable and unfair toward them. They believed sincerely that they were enjoying the highest fruits of human civilization and that they were far in advance of the people of the North, who, themselves, did servile labor in the field, while the Southerners sat in the shadows of the palmettos and the black men did the labor for both. They were forced into the arena to defend their institution, and they took the high ground as they believed it to be, of claiming that slavery was a divine institution, that it was democratic and civilizing. Then they rested, under the Constitution, behind the bulwark of state rights, for it must be conceded that the general government, under the system thus incorporated into its organic law in the forming of the Confederation, had no power over the institution of slavery in the several states which chose to maintain it.

The difficulty with the whole matter lay in the arrogant position of the slaveholder, when he declared that the general government owed to him the duty of protecting the peculiar institution, not only within slave state lines but as well without, when he chose to go with his human property into jurisdictions where slavery was not recognized but strictly prohibited. This was

leaving his own entrenchments, behind which he was reasonably secure, and coming out into the open where the abolitionist and those who were opposed to human bondage had prepared to meet him. The South demanded the abrogation of free speech. It insisted that the postoffice, and all the power that rested within it, should be turned to the protection of the slaveholders and that men should be punished for sending incendiary matter through the mails, and delivering it at offices south of Mason and Dixon's line. There were extreme men on both sides. There were those in the North who insisted that the Union must be dissolved in order to dissolve a co-partnership unwillingly existing between slave and free states. It is unnecessary to go over the arguments advanced by either party in the controversy that began in earnest when John Quincy Adams, the Old Man Eloquent, unaided and alone, fought the battle of the right of petition on the floor of the House of Representatives. As we glance along the pages of our history during this period we see names that attract us and we would gladly dwell upon them but the occasion will not permit. Neither need I dwell upon incidents that brought to the national conscience in unmistakable manner the evils and sufferings that were being inflicted upon human beings by that great wrong in fair sunny southland.

Under other circumstances I might pause to tell you the stories of Matilda Lawrence and

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Margaret Garner. It is enough to know that these were among the incidents growing out of the wrongs inflicted upon the poor black men of the south and their attempts to gain their much coveted freedom. I would not unnecessarily call up unpleasant memories—especially in this day of good feeling and good fellow-ship—and yet, if we are properly to understand conditions that developed character, that made men and history and heroes, we must con our lessons carefully. Effects are the natural sequences of causes. We cannot study the one and neglect the other.

“A dreamer dropped a random thought ; ’twas old, and
yet ’twas new ;

A simple fancy of the brain, but strong in being true.
It shone upon a genial mind, and lo ! its light became

A lamp of life. a beacon ray, a monitory flame.
The thought was small ; its issue great ; a watchfire on
the hill,

It sheds its radiance far adown, and cheers the valley
still !

“A nameless man, amid the crowd that thronged the
daily mart.

Let fall a word of Hope and Love, unstudied, from the
heart ;

A whisper on the tumult thrown,—a transitory breath,—
It raised a brother from the dust ; it saved a soul from
death.

O germ ! O fount ! O word of love ! O thought at random
cast !

Ye were but little at the first, but mighty at the last.”

My purpose is sufficiently attained by referring

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

to these sad incidents in our national life as among the circumstances that awakened the consciences of men. It is good that we may forget. It is good that Time heals wounds. It is good that the children do not always see with the eyes of the parents. "I cannot bring myself to believe," said a fair, sweet Kentucky miss of sixteen recently, "that my grandfather ever owned a man." Do not try to believe it, my dear child, do not try. It is all a horrible dream and let us forget it together.

But the subject of our study to-day is a character that was formed to meet conditions existing more than forty years ago. The scenes and incidents of that period left their mark upon the man and prepared him for the future. The wrongs the poor black man suffered appealed forcibly to the mind and heart and conscience of Abraham Lincoln. It cannot be said that he was not an ambitious man, but his was an ambition to minister to others, rather than to himself. He sought to serve the public well. He early became active in political life. He showed his qualifications as an organizer in more than one political campaign. He came to be recognized in the community where he lived as a leader. When he entered into a movement, whatever it was, he put his whole soul, his whole being into it. It became a part of him. He possessed a fund of originality that carried him onward and upward continually. One of his strongest points

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

in debate was to meet argument with anecdote, which itself, was an unanswerable argument when it came fresh from the lips and heart of the great commoner. In a way he was an orator. I need only refer to his numerous addresses to show this and I think no living man to-day would dare deny it. Many of his expressions are epigrammatical, terse, to the point by the shortest line, absolutely unanswerable and convincing by the force of the purity of their logic. No man uttered a truer sentence than that pronounced by Abraham Lincoln in a speech delivered by him two years before he was nominated for the Presidency, when he said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." This, it is true, was but a quotation but when he followed it up with the sentence, "I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free," he gave utterance to an axiom. It was another way of proclaiming the "irrepressible conflict." And then he followed up his axiom with a statement that could leave no doubt in the minds of his auditors where Abraham Lincoln stood in that conflict. "I do not," he said, "expect the Union to be dissolved,—I do not expect the house to fall,—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward, till

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new—North as well as South.” Here was the issue in a nutshell. He little thought when he stood in his place in Springfield, that day in 1858, that upon him ABRAHAM LINCOLN, would devolve such momentous duties as would follow the election of 1860. And he as little thought that with him by and by must rest the decision that would save the house from falling and would lead to a condition where the house would cease to be divided.

We pass quickly the days of his great debate with Stephen A. Douglas, the little giant of the West, and we come down to a period following the election in 1860, and his safe arrival in the City of Washington. There on the 4th day of March, 1861, on the east steps of the National Capital, he delivered to the world an address that comes down to us to-day replete with soul inspiring, heart-rending remembrances. When that address was delivered I was still the school boy in my teens, wrestling with unsolved problems. It had not then been my privilege to touch the hem of the garment of the great man who on that memorable day took the oath of office of President of the United States, but, sitting in the quiet of my room I read over and over again his passionate appeal for peace and for nationality that I knew came from the very soul of an honest patriot. I felt in my own heart that the heart of Abraham Lincoln was the true

heart of the Nation. I felt that in the man who gave utterance to such sentiments the cause of justice, right and national liberty could be reposed with perfect confidence in the result. Later I came to know the man well and I found him even grander and truer and nobler than I had pictured him in my own mind to be.

Let us turn back several pages of our history for a moment while I read a few sentences from the immortal Inaugural address. With what pathos he dwells upon the duty that all, both North and South, owed to the Union. How carefully he points to the characteristics that make the Government Federal in its character, yet a single nation; and with what exceeding nicety he demonstrates the fact that the States cannot be severed from one another; that the Union is a Union for all the future and the South as well as the North owe allegiance, service and devotion to the central government under the compact that brought them together into one system. In the closing paragraphs he especially appeals to the men of the South to think calmly and well upon the whole subject before they take any rash action in opposition to the federal authority. The two closing paragraphs read to-day not like ordinary sentences that we gather here and there among the noted speeches of the world, but rather like prophecy. "In your hands," he said, "my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect and defend it.' "

"I am loathe to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

While Abraham Lincoln had able advisers, many of whom I knew personally and intimately and whose memory I cherish dearly, yet I would emphasize the fact that ABRAHAM LINCOLN WAS PRESIDENT. He listened to advice; if it appealed to him as wise and judicious he promptly and frankly accepted it. He recognized the fact in the early days of his administration that there was coming to him a trial such as no other man had ever experienced. Here was the last great effort of a people to establish free government. There were not few to prophesy that the experiment would be a failure. Like an echo of the first shot of the rebellion, rebounding from the chalk cliffs of old England, and as quickly as the

returning waves of air could bring it back to our own shores, came the murmur of satisfaction and rejoicing at—what was then taken as an established fact—our national dissolution. Mr. Justin McCarthy, the author of “The History of our own Times,” tells us that, “The vast majority of what are called the governing classes were on the side of the South. London club life was virtually all Southern. The most powerful papers in London and the most popular papers as well, were open partisans of the Southern confederation.” A writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* for November 1861, says: “We have read at least three English newspapers for each week that has passed since our troubles began; we have been a reader of these papers for a series of years. In not one of them have we met the sentence or the line which pronounces hopefully, with bold assurance for the renewed life of our Union. In by far the most of them there is reiterated the most positive and dogged averment that there is no future for us.” A writer in the *Edinburgh “Quarterly Review”* said, “We believe the conquest of the South to be a hopeless dream, and the reunion of the states in one all-powerful republic an impossibility. There is verge and room enough on the vast continent of America for two or three, or even more, powerful republics, and each may flourish undisturbed, if so inclined, without being a source of disquiet to its neighbors. There will be no loss of anything

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

which conduces to the general happiness of mankind. For the contest on the part of the North now is undisguisedly for empire."

Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, the novelist, who wrote most enticing stories, but who was born and bred under monarchial institutions, could not conceal his sentiments. Not long after the attack on Fort Sumter, he said, "I venture to predict that the younger men here present will live to see not two, but at least four, separate and sovereign commonwealths arising out of those populations which a year ago united their legislation under one president and carried their merchandise under one flag. I believe that such separation will be attended with happy results to the safety of Europe and the development of American civilization. If it could have been possible that as population and wealth increased, all that vast continent of America, with her mighty sea-board and the fleets which her increasing ambition as well as her extending commerce would have formed and armed, could have remained under one form of Government, in which the executive has little or no control over a populace exceedingly adventurous and excitable, why, then America would have hung over Europe like a gathering and destructive thunder cloud. No single kingdom in Europe could have been strong enough to maintain itself against a nation that had consolidated the gigantic resources of a quarter of the globe."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The Earl of Shrewsbury said: "I see in America the trial of democracy and its failure. I believe that the dissolution of the Union is inevitable, and that men now before me will live to see an aristocracy established in America."

All these utterances came to the knowledge of Abraham Lincoln. He saw clearly the rough road before him. Mr. Seward was at the head of the foreign department. The magnificent service he rendered the nation there is known and admitted. With what a firm hand he held our diplomatic officers up to a high standard in their intercourse with foreign states, we know and we read as a part of the history of that eventful period. For example, he said, to Mr. Charles Francis Adams, when setting out to his mission at The Court of St. James,—“You will in no case listen to any suggestions of compromise by this government under foreign auspices, with its discontented citizens. If, as the president does not at all apprehend, you shall unhappily find her majesty’s government tolerating the application of the so-called seceding states, or wavering about it, you will not leave them to suppose for a moment that they can grant that application and remain the friends of the United States. You may even assure them promptly in that case that if they determine to recognize, they may at the same time prepare to enter into an alliance with, the enemies of this republic. You alone will represent your

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

country at London, and you will represent the whole of it there. When you are asked to divide that duty with others, diplomatic relations between the government of Great Britain and this government will be suspended, and will remain so until it shall be seen which of the two is most strongly entrenched in the confidence of their respective nations and of mankind."

It is well known that not only was this strong language known to Mr. Lincoln but that suggestions were made by him in its preparation. We know how Confederate privateers, sent out from British ports, preyed upon the commerce of the nation and we know how excellent a bookkeeper Mr. Seward was and how carefully he kept the account that was afterward fully adjusted and audited at Geneva. It is not too much to say, and in saying it no credit due to William H. Seward and his magnificent administration of our foreign relations during that period is taken from him, that ABRAHAM LINCOLN was at the helm of the Ship of State; that while he may not have formulated diplomatic instructions, he may not have watched constantly over these relations as his sleepless Secretary did, yet he was continually and closely in touch with every step taken in respect to them.

It is well, in this connection, that we do not overlook the fact, that in those gloomy days of our peril, there was one nation in all the group of foreign powers that had a kind word to say to

us. Whatever betide in the changing of the map of the eastern hemisphere, we will never forget the timely acts of Russia when this nation was passing through the dark and stormy days of the slaveholders' Rebellion. It may have been an anomalous international condition that would bring to free America in her struggle for national existence friendly relations with the most despotic government in the world; but, whatever the circumstances were, whatever conditions existed, it is nevertheless the fact that when other leading nations of Europe were deliberating upon the proposition of recognizing the independence of the so-called confederacy, and had even resolved upon such a course, Russia sent her ships of war to the American sea board, bearing sealed orders, a menace to the nation that dared to frown upon the young republic. A Russian admiral, while sojourning in the port of New York, was asked by one of our own admirals, with whom he was on terms of intimacy, why he was spending the winter in idleness in an American harbor, and his reply was, "I am here under sealed orders, to be broken only on a contingency which has not yet occurred." He added also that the Russian men-of-war lying off San Francisco had received the same orders. He admitted in that same interview that his orders were to break the seals, if, while he remained at New York, the United States became involved in a war with any foreign nation. And

the Russian Minister at Washington said to Mr. Seward that it was no unfriendly purpose which caused the prolonged stay of these men-of-war in American waters. A prominent American while in St. Petersburg subsequently was shown the Czar's orders to his Admiral,—sealed till then,—and they were to report to the President of the United States for duty in case our government became involved in a war with England. Looking now,—after forty years—upon the pages of that history which cannot in one jot or tittle be changed, is it not natural that we should hold for Russia most pleasant memories? And may we not stop a moment when we hear of Russian reverses in the far East, and ask ourselves if all the sympathy that America has to bestow upon people of other lands, belongs entirely to yellow races? Is it not at least profitable, just for one moment, to pause and ask, of two perils to the world, is the white peril liable to be more detrimental to civilization than the yellow peril? But I am not unmindful of the occasion that brings us here to-day and I stop with this passing comment on the unfortunate conditions that exist across many seas in the far Eastern portion of the globe.

Those were trying days indeed, when the nation, all unprepared, had to meet the well disciplined leaders of rebellion and conquer success. Few men knew the trials that beset the pathway of the President of the Nation. There

was the financial question to be considered. Our relations with other nations came boldly to the front. There were questions pertaining to the Navy, whose ships were scattered to the four winds of Heaven by the conspirators who had been hatching treason for months under the weak administration that preceded that of Lincoln. There were questions in the law department,—questions in the postoffice department, and last, but by no means the least, there was an army to be organized and put into the field. For months after the southern states had passed their Ordinances of Secession the United States Government was reaching out all over that fair sunny south land by its postal facilities and was delivering mails to citizens at their doors the same as though there was no armed resistance organized and established against the authority that was thus peacefully and quietly doing its duty toward them. Then again, it was by no means a trivial matter that the great President must consider when he turned to the legal questions that confronted him. He was not elected President to destroy a Constitution, as he said in that first immortal Inaugural Address, but he was elected to preserve it. Under the Constitution slavery existed in a large portion of the country and existed by right of State Constitutions and laws. Under the compact the Government had no power to abolish slavery in these States. Abraham Lincoln, with clear

foresight, with unerring precision, saw the difficulties that confronted him, knew better than any legal adviser could tell him where his line of duty extended, and knew well, that until it became a necessity as a war measure for the purpose of overthrowing those who were in arms against the Government, he had no power to interfere with the institution established by state enactment. We do not forget when there were not in the English language vituperative expressions strong enough, in the minds of radicals and rebel sympathisers, with which to assail the President. We do not forget how the administration was importuned to adopt a different policy than it was pursuing, how men, high in party councils, strong in national reputations, big with success achieved in their own walks in life, in editorial work, on the floors of legislative halls, on the rostrum and in the pulpit, assailed the methods, the purposes, the honesty, integrity and patriotism of one who has gone down in history as one of the purest, noblest, most unselfish and patriotic men who ever breathed the free air of a free nation. If time would permit me, I could easily give instances where, smarting under the calumny heaped upon him both by friend and foe, this grand man sought to respond to these attacks, and, as we look over the history to-day, we see how successfully he accomplished his purpose.

I have said that I had no personal acquaintance

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

with Abraham Lincoln when he delivered his first Inaugural Address. Not very many months after that memorable March day, however, fortune led me to the Capital and for many days I was placed in a position where I was brought in frequent contact with the man whose memory we revere. Frequently have I taken his hand, or more properly speaking, have I felt his great hand encircling my own. He was a large man. He was a generous man. You felt it when his hand closed around your own, and as your own was loosed, you could but say that it had been grasped by the hand of a giant in more senses than one. He may have been an awkward man as we measure the personality and the gentility of men, but, as I think of him to-day, I cannot think of him as an awkward man. His extreme length of limb may sometimes have been a little embarrassing to him when meeting smaller men, but he was none too tall, none too large, and I feel that he was in all particulars just the man in stature that was needed to stand at the helm of the Ship of State while it plowed its way through the tempestuous seas from 1861 to 1865. I stood almost where I could lay my hand upon his when, on the front steps of the National Capitol on the 4th day of March, 1865, after four years of bitter trial—four long years of cruel war—and after coming in sight of the white peaks that signalled the coming day, he delivered his second Inaugural Address and

again took the oath of office as President of the United States. That address was brief; it hardly required five minutes in which to deliver it, but it contained all that was needed. I remember how disappointed I was as I stood there and heard the final words. It seemed to me that he had omitted something he ought to say. Now, however, as I read it over again, I feel that it was complete. Note the devout prayer as it fell from the lips of the great President,—“Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away; yet if it be God’s will that it continue until the wealth piled by bondsmen by two hundred and fifty years’ unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said; that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nations’ wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans; to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

A few weeks later, the nation was electrified by the news from Appomattox. I sat at my desk three evenings later when I heard the sweet

strains of music from a passing procession. Still instinct with a boy's love of music—and I was always quite ready to follow a band—I joined the procession and stood under the President's window at the White House. There I heard him deliver the last speech he ever made to the American people. It was the calm deliberate statement of a man full of experience, hopeful for the future, anxious to make no mistakes, with a heartfelt feeling of charity to those who had been misguided in their attack upon the general Government. He carefully outlined rules for action in strict compliance with his second Inaugural Address. Only two days after that memorable evening under the President's window, I saw Abraham Lincoln for the last time. It was Good Friday. He was in the full strength of his manhood, flushed with a sense of victory that was then crowning the efforts he had been making for a period of more than four years. I sat in a front seat in the dress circle of Ford's Theatre. Laura Keene and her troupe were on the stage; there was a commotion back of the dress circle; and I arose with the audience to welcome to the play the man whom almost everyone had then learned to love. I thought, as I saw him come unguarded into the gathering that night, that someone had blundered, for there were lying on the table of Cabinet Ministers at the moment confidential messages from foreign countries, some of which had passed through my

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

own hands, which, alone should have prompted those who were watching over the safety of the President to keep near his person, whether he willed it or not, sufficient protection to guard against any possible disaster. Fearless in all his lifetime, because he felt that he had nothing to fear from men, he had never hesitated to assume any risks that might possibly be thrown upon him in the honest discharge of his duties. I saw him ride to the front where bullets were making music in the ears of those in his company, when General Early threw his army north of the Capitol in 1864, but Abraham Lincoln feared no bullets, nor cannon balls, nor assassins' knives, and he went boldly and fearlessly wherever it seemed to him that duty called him. No Cabinet Minister was lax in duty, for the President would not consent that a guard should follow or protect him. He gave no credit to stories of plots of assassination and would not believe that the country held one who would be so depraved as to wish to do him bodily harm. And so on that sad Good Friday night in 1865, unguarded except by consciousness of integrity, he entered Ford's Theatre, received the greetings of glad hearts, smiled and bowed his head in a winning manner, and passed into the box, whence one brief hour afterward I saw him borne away by soldier hands to the house across the street, where on the following morning his spirit went to join the innumerable host of boys in blue, boys, who, if they

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

were here to-day, would wear the bronze button on the lapel of their coats, boys who had been where bullets were thick, where cannon balls had been all-powerful and whose memory we cherish and revere with that of the Martyr President and in whose honor we scatter flowers on the 30th day of every May.

The whole world wept at the bier of Abraham Lincoln. While living, men could revile him and mock him, could point to his ungainly manner, his homely person and his more homely expressions and stories, but dead, the tongue of calumny was still. Suddenly the true worth of the man; the full measure of his ability; the high standard of his surpassing intellect and the devotion of his life were recognized. Those homely expressions and stories will live when the men who reviled him and them shall have been forgotten for more than a thousand years. The world appreciated Abraham Lincoln when it could own him no more. I have in my library a volume as large as an unabridged dictionary that is devoted to tributes to the memory of Abraham Lincoln gathered from the world. Men vied with one another to extol his virtues and pay tribute to his worth. Poets sang of him, orators pronounced eulogies over him, and at last, but only when his lips were sealed forever, he was recognized at his full value by the whole world. His name to-day is enrolled among the names of the

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

great of all times and of all lands, and his figure stands in every Hall of Fame.

Lord Beaconsfield, who himself, was one of the greatest minds that England has produced, said of the sad event that had removed the great President from the head of the Nation, that,—
“In the character of the victim, and even in the accessories of his last moments, there is something so homely and innocent that it takes the question, as it were, out of all the pomp of history and the ceremonial of diplomacy,—it touches the heart of nations and appeals to the domestic sentiment of mankind. Whatever the various and varying opinions * * * on the policy of the late President of the United States, all must agree that in one of the severest trials which ever tested the moral qualities of man he fulfilled his duty with simplicity and strength. Nor is it possible for the people of England at such a moment to forget that he sprang from the same fatherland and spoke the same mother tongue.”

It is with feelings of pleasure that I quote these words from the eminent English statesman, especially in contradistinction of the language so freely indulged in, and which I have so liberally quoted in a preceding portion of my address.

It was left, however, for Henry Ward Beecher, in his inimitable manner, two days after the sad event that took from us our beloved Lincoln, to speak words that feelingly indicate the true char-

acter of the man that had learned so well to live. From Plymouth Church pulpit the great Congregational minister among other things said, "By day and by night, he trod a way of danger and darkness. On his shoulders rested a government dearer to him than his own life. At its integrity millions of men were striking at home. Upon this government foreign eyes lowered. It stood like a lone island in a sea full of storms, and every tide and wave seemed eager to devour it. Upon thousands of hearts great sorrows and anxieties have rested, but not on one such, and in such measure, as upon that simple, truthful, noble soul, our faithful and sainted Lincoln."

* * * "He wrestled ceaselessly through four black and dreadful purgatorial years, wherein God was cleansing the sin of his people as by fire." * * * "Even he who now sleeps has, by this event, been clothed with new influence. Dead, he speaks to men who now willingly hear what before they refused to listen to. Now his simple and weighty words will be gathered like those of Washington, and your children and your children's children shall be taught to ponder the simplicity and deep wisdom of utterances, which, in their time, passed, in party heat, as idle words. Men will receive a new impulse of patriotism for his sake and will guard with zeal the whole country which he loved so well." * * *

"Four years ago, O Illinois, we took from your midst an untried man and from among the

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

people. We return him to you a mighty conqueror. Not thine any more, but the nation's; not ours, but the world's. Give him place, O ye prairies. In the midst of this great continent his dust shall rest, a sacred treasure to myriads who shall pilgrim to that shrine to kindle anew their zeal and patriotism. Ye winds that move over the mighty places of the West, chant his requiem. Ye people, behold a martyr whose blood, as so many articulate words, pleads for fidelity, for law, for liberty."

Abraham Lincoln has enriched the English language. He has left on many pages of our history words that will live when this generation and many that succeed it will all be forgotten. Many of his speeches are classic. To-day they are placed side by side with the great speeches of all ages. They are in and of themselves gems of literature. Homely, in a way unattractive, in a sense lacking what some people might call refinement, and yet, not homely, but attractive and because genuine and true possessing the truest, highest and sweetest refinement. His personality stands out big against the horizon of well remembered history. Edward Everett delivered a great address when the Nation's representatives met on the hallowed ground of Gettysburg to dedicate it as a national cemetery. It was a studied, scholarly, refined production. It will bear reading over and over again. It is replete with beautiful sentiment, well rounded

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

sentences, magnificent in its diction, in its erudition, in its every element. He had been days, undoubtedly, putting together the beautiful expressions contained in it, but the two score lines of the address delivered by Abraham Lincoln on that occasion come down to us to-day almost like words of Holy Writ. They are this day being pronounced all over this continent on celebrations of this National holiday. It is related, that, with pencil and the blank side of a used envelope, in a car while on his way to the battlefield, Abraham Lincoln wrote the address. True, this story is denied. Some of his biographers, who ought to know, tell us he prepared it carefully in the quiet of his room. Be that as it may, it matters little; THIS we know, that the brief address delivered by Abraham Lincoln at the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, on the 19th day of November, 1863, is to-day one of the most beautiful and touching classics in the English Language.

I am loath to pronounce the closing words of my address. I love to dwell upon the beauties of the character of the immortal President. It seems but yesterday that I looked into his careworn but honest face and felt my hand encircled by his, but Abraham Lincoln has passed from the visible to the invisible. The incident in life that comes once, and but once, to all men, has come to him. He watches where we cannot see while we move on to perfect the work he could

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

not remain to finish. The Civil War is over but our tasks are not all done. There are other battles to fight for freedom, other victories to win. He, with a "cloud of witnesses," boys in blue and boys in gray, an innumerable host, is watching that we work well the problem still unsolved. Though invisible, he speaks to us, his voice ringing down the corridors of Time, as it will continue to do, to generations yet unborn, inciting us and them to better deeds and better lives. His words,—first spoken at Gettysburg in 1863,—reach and apply to every foot of American soil. "In a large sense," he said, "we cannot dedicate,—we cannot consecrate,—we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried on. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion ; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain ; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that Government of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

